

News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Safety is the number-one concern

Boating Safety Week Recognized In California State Parks, May 21 - 27

SACRAMENTO: California State Parks is joining government agencies throughout the United States in recognizing Boating Safety Week, May 21 – 27.

Visitors are urged to enjoy California State Parks' lakes, rivers and waterways safely. Here are some important safety tips:

* Rivers and streams are much colder, running uncommonly high, and are much swifter due to recent rains and record snow pack. State Park Rangers and Lifeguards are urging visitors to "stay out and stay alive." Any river within the state of California can be dangerous.

* Parents are urged to make sure their children wear life jackets whenever they're boating. Children under 12 years of age must wear a properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket while underway in a boat. It's been estimated that life jackets could prevent approximately two-thirds of all boating-related drownings of children ages 14 and under.

* Carry life preservers. You must carry at least one U.S. Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device for each person on board. Any person on board a personal watercraft and any person being towed behind a vessel on water skis, an aquaplane, or similar device must wear a U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jacket. We recommend that all boaters wear a personal flotation device when on the water.

* When recreating in a river environment or on a boat, *everyone* should wear a life jacket.

* Be aware of the dangers of carbon monoxide while boating and never allow anyone to "teak surf" (holding onto the swim platform or transom of an underway vessel to bodysurf on the wake of the vessel) on your boat. It's against the law! As of May 1, California boaters will be required to place stickers on their newly purchased boats warning against the threat of marine carbon monoxide poisoning. The decals must be approved by the Department of Boating and Waterways, the state agency responsible for implementing the law.

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- * Be familiar with and follow all applicable boating laws, rules and regulations.
- * Never operate a boat or water recreational vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- * Take boating safety classes before operating a water recreational vehicle.
- * Always exercise caution and be aware of submerged objects. Visitors need to use caution on waterways because of the increase in natural debris such as downed trees and wood during high water. Caution should be taken when boating along shorelines because of the possibility of snakes that have been displaced and can be swimming in the water.
- * Because of the increased flow on rivers, users should check for flow levels before embarking on a trip down the river.
- * Check your boat prior to a trip to verify that the vessel is in good working order. Always make sure that the following items are available and working: a first aid kit, life jackets in good repair with a sufficient number on board for all passengers, a throwable life saving device such as floating cushions or a life ring, some type of emergency communication such as a Marine radio, cell phone or other communication device. Additionally, running lights should be in working order even if you don't intend to be out after dark. If your boat is equipped with a bilge pump, make sure it is working properly. If your vessel doesn't have an automatic pump, a hand operated pump or bailing buckets should be available on board. Also, have an anchor with sufficient chain and line to anchor in emergencies especially with the rivers running high and fast. A disabled boat can put its occupants in greater danger if it is allowed to drift into hazards or a rocky shore line. The anchor can stabilize the boat's position in the river until help can be summoned.
- * Exercise patience and be considerate of others when launching, operating and tailoring your boat.
- * Always be aware of what others are doing around you. Remember, boats don't have brakes!
- * Have fun!

For more information about California State Parks, visit us on line at

www.parks.ca.gov

Or visit the Department of Boating and Waterways at

www.dbw.ca.gov

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